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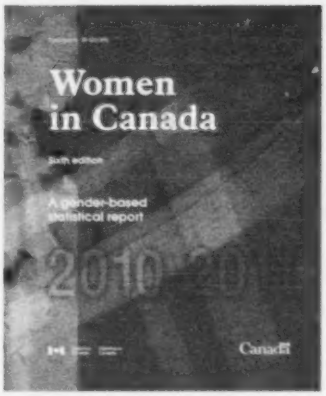
Women in Canada: A Gender-based Statistical Report

Article

# Women and Education

by Martin Turcotte

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# Women in Canada: A Gender-based Statistical Report

## Women and Education

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| | |
|---|---|
| . | not available for any reference period |
| .. | not available for a specific reference period |
| ... | not applicable |
| 0 | true zero or a value rounded to zero |
| 0s | value rounded to 0 (zero) where there is a meaningful distinction between true zero and the value that was rounded |
| p | preliminary |
| r | revised |
| x | suppressed to meet the confidentiality requirements of the *Statistics Act* |
| E | use with caution |
| F | too unreliable to be published |


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# Women and Education

*by Martin Turcotte*

## Introduction

Women have progressed considerably in terms of education and schooling over the past few decades. Just 20 years ago, a smaller percentage of women than men aged 25 to 54 had a postsecondary education. Today, the situation is completely different. Education indicators show that women generally do better than men. This gap in favour of women is even noticeable at a young age, since girls often get better marks than boys in elementary and secondary school.

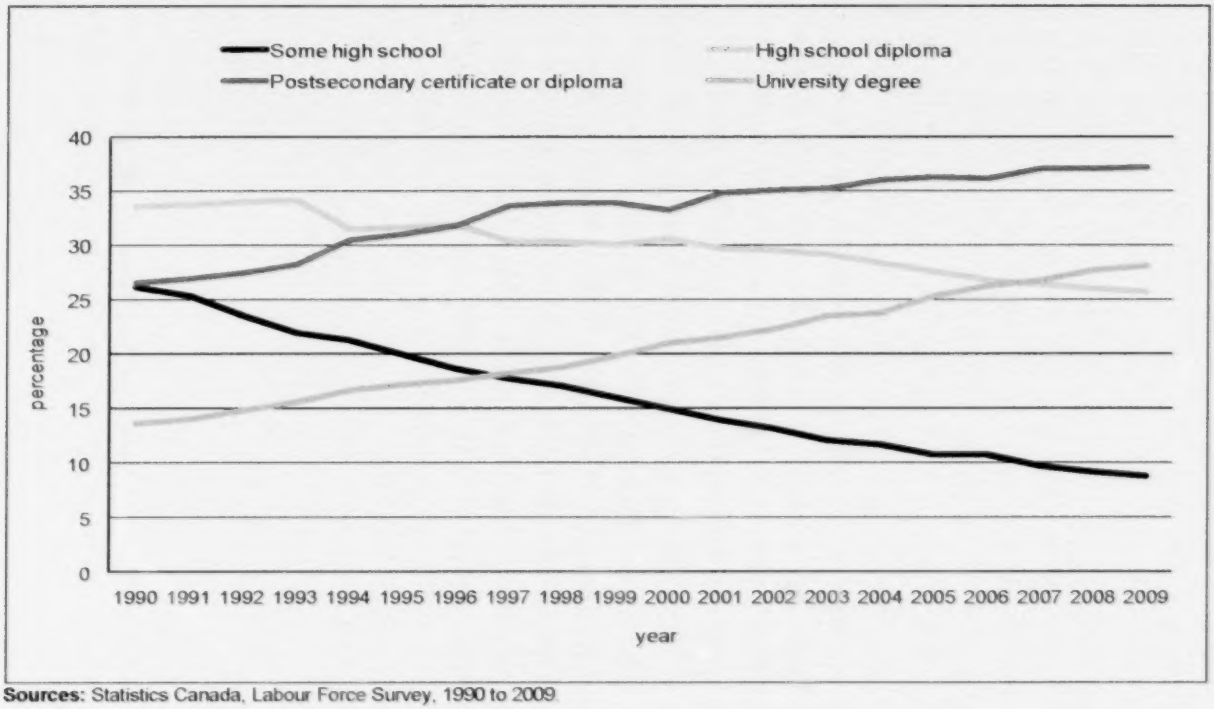
As well, more girls than boys earn their high school diploma within the expected timeframe and girls are less likely to drop out. More women than men enrol in college and university programs after completing their high school education. A greater percentage of women leave these programs with a diploma or degree. Despite all that, certain challenges persist: women's employment earnings are on average still lower than men's, even when they have the same education level (see the chapter on the economic well-being of women).

In this chapter, we will examine various education indicators. First we will present a general profile of women's education, showing how the situation of women changed over time compared to that of men. Then we will look at more detailed data on different steps along the pathway from elementary and secondary school to university.

## Evolution of schooling from 1990 to 2009

In 1990, about one-quarter of women aged 25 to 54 had not earned a high school diploma and only 14% of them had a university degree (Chart 1).

### Chart 1
### Distribution of women aged 25 to 54, by highest level of educational attainment, Canada, 1990 to 2009




**Sources:** Statistics Canada, Labour Force Survey, 1990 to 2009.

Two decades later, the situation had completely changed. The proportion of women aged 25 to 54 with a bachelor or postgraduate university degree had more than doubled, reaching 28% in 2009. The proportion of women who had not completed high school dropped considerably, from 26% in 1990 to 9% in 2009 (Chart 1). The proportion of men who had not completed high school had dropped as well. However, their participation rate in university education had not increased as quickly as that of women. As a result, a smaller proportion of men than women had a university degree in 2009, the opposite of the situation in 1990 (Table 1).

**Table 1**
**Distribution of women and men, by age group and highest level of educational attainment, Canada, 1990 and 2009**

| Highest level of educational attainment | 25 to 34 | | | | 25 to 54 | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | 1990 | | 2009 | | 1990 | | 2009 | |
| | Women | Men | Women | Men | Women | Men | Women | Men |
| | percentage | | | | | | | |
| 0 to 8 years | 3.9 | 4.6 | 1.4 | 1.5 | 8.6 | 9.0 | 2.2 | 2.7 |
| Some high school | 15.5 | 17.9 | 5.2 | 8.0 | 17.5 | 18.0 | 6.6 | 9.2 |
| High school diploma | 27.3 | 23.0 | 15.0 | 19.3 | 25.4 | 20.0 | 19.4 | 19.7 |
| Some postsecondary | 9.9 | 9.7 | 7.4 | 8.2 | 8.2 | 8.1 | 6.3 | 6.5 |
| Postsecondary certificate/diploma | 28.3 | 29.3 | 36.7 | 37.0 | 26.6 | 27.8 | 37.2 | 36.8 |
| University degree | 15.0 | 15.6 | 34.3 | 26.0 | 13.7 | 17.1 | 28.1 | 25.1 |
| | thousands | | | | | | | |
| **Total population** | **2,466** | **2,469** | **2,265** | **2,280** | **6,016** | **6,014** | **7,262** | **7,256** |

**Sources:** Statistics Canada, Labour Force Survey, 1990 and 2009.

Reflecting the fact that more women than men are now in university, the gender-based differences were even more pronounced among young adults. In 2009, 34% of women aged 25 to 34 had at least a bachelor's degree, compared to 26% of men (Table 1).

## Provincial variations by level of educational attainment

In all provinces, most women aged 25 to 54 had completed at least high school (Table 2). This proportion reached a peak in British Columbia and Ontario where, respectively, 93% and 92% of women had at least a high school diploma. Even though the difference with the other provinces was relatively low, it is in Newfoundland and Labrador (86%) and Quebec (89%) that women in this age group were less likely to have earned their high school diploma.

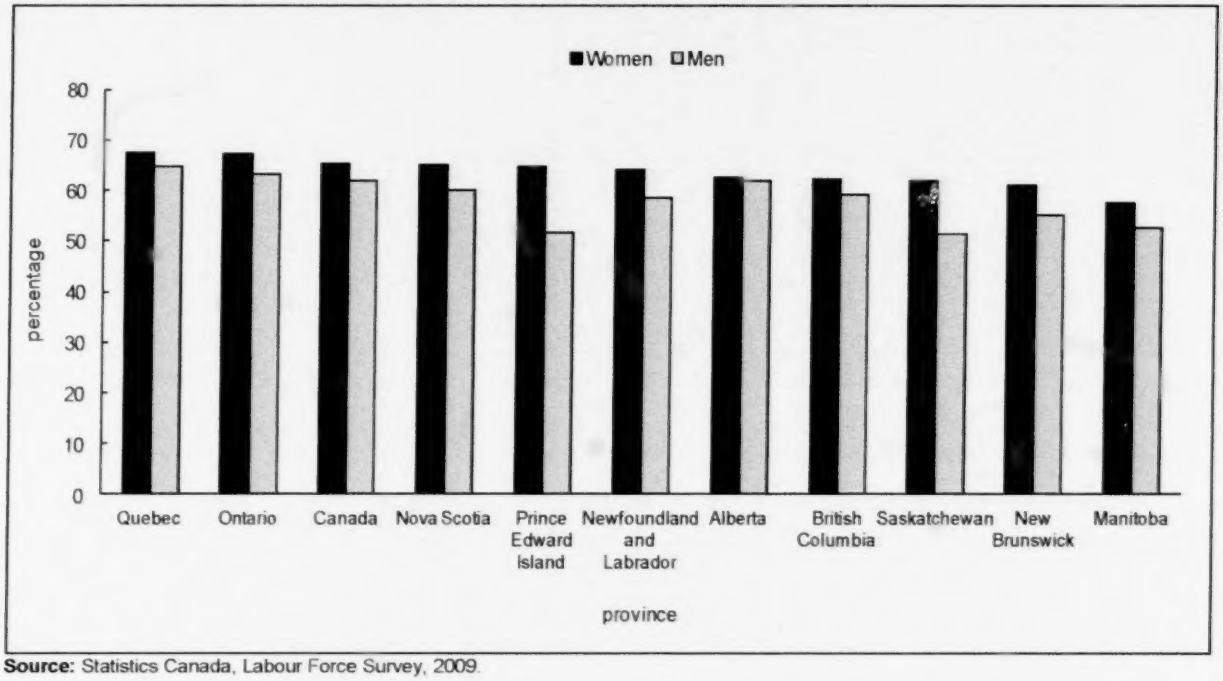
**Table 2**
**Distribution of women and men aged 25 to 54, by province and highest level of educational attainment, 2009**

| Province | 0 to 8 years | | Some high school | | High school diploma | | Some postsecondary | | Postsecondary certificate or diploma | | University degree | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | Women | Men | Women | Men | Women | Men | Women | Men | Women | Men | Women | Men |
| | percentage | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Canada | 2.2 | 2.7 | 6.6 | 9.2 | 19.4 | 19.7 | 6.3 | 6.5 | 37.2 | 36.8 | 28.1 | 25.1 |
| Newfoundland and Labrador | 4.2 | 6.2 | 10.2 | 11.0 | 16.9 | 17.5 | 4.6 | 6.6 | 44.4 | 43.6 | 19.7 | 15.0 |
| Prince Edward Island | 1.7 | 5.4 | 8.5 | 14.8 | 18.7 | 21.3 | 6.5 | 7.2 | 41.8 | 35.4 | 22.8 | 16.2 |
| Nova Scotia | 1.6 | 3.6 | 9.0 | 12.7 | 17.8 | 17.0 | 6.4 | 6.4 | 40.0 | 39.2 | 25.2 | 21.0 |
| New Brunswick | 2.9 | 5.5 | 7.0 | 9.9 | 22.0 | 22.8 | 7.3 | 6.5 | 38.9 | 37.7 | 22.0 | 17.6 |
| Quebec | 3.1 | 4.2 | 8.4 | 10.8 | 15.8 | 14.8 | 5.4 | 5.5 | 41.4 | 41.9 | 26.0 | 22.8 |
| Ontario | 2.0 | 2.1 | 5.7 | 7.8 | 19.7 | 20.6 | 5.4 | 6.2 | 36.3 | 34.8 | 30.9 | 28.5 |
| Manitoba | 2.9 | 2.9 | 7.6 | 12.6 | 23.0 | 22.6 | 8.8 | 9.4 | 33.4 | 32.8 | 24.3 | 19.8 |
| Saskatchewan | 1.3 | 2.1 | 5.6 | 11.4 | 23.5 | 27.6 | 7.4 | 7.2 | 39.1 | 34.1 | 23.0 | 17.4 |
| Alberta | 1.4 | 1.8 | 7.3 | 9.3 | 21.7 | 20.6 | 7.1 | 6.2 | 35.9 | 38.5 | 26.8 | 23.6 |
| British Columbia | 1.6 | 1.6 | 5.0 | 7.7 | 21.7 | 22.6 | 9.4 | 9.0 | 32.8 | 32.5 | 29.5 | 26.7 |

**Source:** Statistics Canada, Labour Force Survey, 2009.

The differences between provinces were somewhat more pronounced when looking at the proportion of people completing postsecondary studies. Women in Quebec and Ontario were most likely to have earned a postsecondary degree (Chart 2). Yet this was also the case for men in these two provinces. In Quebec, students who want to go to university must earn a CEGEP (college) diploma; this requirement has an impact on postsecondary education completion rates.

**Chart 2**
**Percentage of women and men with a postsecondary degree, by province, 2009**




**Source:** Statistics Canada, Labour Force Survey, 2009.

As well, the difference between women and men varied noticeably from one region to another. For example, in Alberta, a very similar proportion of women and men aged 25 to 54 had completed high school (63% and 62%, respectively). In Prince Edward Island, the proportions were 65% of women and 52% of men.

At the university level, Ontario had the highest proportion of graduates among women aged 25 to 54 in 2009, namely 31% (Table 2). In Newfoundland and Labrador, this proportion was 20%. It should be noted that university graduates living in a given region were not necessarily born there. In fact, some regions of the country can attract university graduates born elsewhere or who received their education in another region or province.

## Elementary and secondary school

Recent studies have demonstrated that, during their first years at school and even earlier, young girls do better than boys (see text box). At age 15, slight differences between boys and girls are also noticeable in the test results measuring various skills. Although girls do better than boys in reading, they do slightly less well in mathematics (Table 3).

We also see the same types of gaps within the adult population. In fact, in 2003, the last year for which data on the adult population are available, women aged 16 to 65 did better than men in comprehension and interpretation of prose (Table 4). Thus, 40% of women were at the low level of competence in reading, compared with 44% of men (namely 4,227,800 women aged 16 to 65 at the low level of competence versus 4,698,600 men in the same age group). However, women did not fare as well as men did in numeracy.

**Table 3**
**Test results of 15-year-old girls and boys in the Program for International Student Assessment, Canada, 2000, 2003, 2006 and 2009**

| Field of study | 2000 | | 2003 | | 2006 | | 2009 | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | Girls | Boys | Girls | Boys | Girls | Boys | Girls | Boys |
| | average result | | | | | | | |
| Sciences – Overall | 531 | 529 | 516 | 527 | 532 | 536 | 526 | 531 |
| Reading | 551 | 519 | 546 | 514 | 543 | 511 | 542 | 507 |
| Mathematics | 529 | 539 | 530 | 541 | 520 | 534 | 521 | 533 |

**Note:** The results represent boys' and girls' averages on a scale where the average is 500 points for the countries of the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development. This way, the results of the different countries can be compared with each other and to the average for all the countries.
**Sources:** Program for International Student Assessment, 2000, 2003, 2006 and 2009.

**Table 4**
**Literacy results, men and women aged 16 to 65 years, Canada, 2003**

| Literacy | Women | Men |
|---|---|---|
| | average result | |
| Prose scale | 284 | 278 |
| Document literacy | 279 | 282 |
| Numeracy | 265 | 280 |
| Problem resolution scale | 274 | 273 |

**Note:** The results represent the averages on a scale of 0 to 500.
**Source:** Adult Literacy and Life Skills Survey, 2003.

These differences between women and men may indicate different gender-based preferences and interests. Also, ~~-~~differences in occupational choices, course enrolment and training can lead to differing pathways over the lifespan that influence the development and maintenance of skills in specific domains".[1]

1. Statistics Canada and Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development. 2005. *Learning a Living: First Results of the Adult Literacy and Life Skills Survey*.

## Girls aged 5 and 9: Readiness to learn and elementary school results

### Readiness to learn at age 5

In 2006, Statistics Canada presented the results of an extensive study to determine how ready 5-year-olds were to learn when starting elementary school.[2] They compared boys and girls on 11 measurements, including language and communication skills, academic skills, self-regulation of learning, self-control of behaviour as well as social competence and independence.

In general, the study found that 5-year-old girls exceeded boys of the same age in terms of readiness to learn. Girls scored higher than boys in communication skills, attention, self-control of behaviour and independence in dressing. However, boys ranked higher than girls with respect to curiosity.

For example, the average score of 5-year-olds for independence in dressing was 82. Girls on average scored 87 and boys 78. For the attention rating, girls got 9.3, compared with 8.5 for boys. In terms of curiosity, the study found that 67% of boys often showed curiosity, versus 48% of girls.

Despite these differences, the study showed that girls and boys begin school with equivalent skills in several areas (vocabulary understood by the child, work effort, co-operative play and independence in cleanliness).

### Nine-year-olds at school

Another study by Statistics Canada, measuring the outcomes of 9-year-olds during their transition from primary to junior grades, was published in 2009.[3] One of the reasons for looking at the school outcomes of children at this particular age is that "between the primary and junior levels the academic program changes from one focused on developing basic literacy, numeracy and other skills to a subject-based curriculum which assumes that these skills are in place"[4]. Students who have not acquired these skills before the start of the junior years may experience academic difficulties later on.

The study showed that 9-year-old girls and boys were no different in terms of success in mathematics in Grades 3 or 4. However, girls did better than boys when it came to attention. In general, girls were more likely to perform better in reading and written work. On a scale of 0 to 10 measuring attention, girls scored on average 7.5 and boys, 6.7.

When parents were asked how they would assess their 9-year-old's academic performance, 80% of them felt that their daughter did well or very well, compared with 69% for the boys. The difference between boys and girls was especially significant in written work: 71% of parents stated that their daughter had good or very good performance. In comparison, only 54% of parents felt that their son did well in their written work.

Since they generally experienced fewer difficulties, girls (19%) were less likely than boys (24%) to receive tutoring or extra help to overcome academic difficulties.

2. Statistics Canada. 2006. "Study: Readiness to learn at school among five-year-old children, 2002/2003," *The Daily*, November 27, 2006.
3. Statistics Canada. 2009. "Study: Canadian nine-year-olds at school, 2006/2007," *The Daily*, September 25, 2009.
4. Thomas, Eleanor M. 2009. "Canadian Nine-year-olds at School", *Research paper — Children and Youth Research Paper Series*, Statistics Canada Catalogue no. 89-599.

## High school graduation and dropping out

A larger proportion of girls than boys earn their high school diploma within the expected timeframe. In 2006, 84% of 19-year-old women had a high school diploma, compared with 77% of men in the same age group (Table 5).[5] There was a smaller difference for 25-year-olds. In 2006, 90% of women and 86% of men aged 25 had a high school diploma.

### Table 5
### Percentage of people who earned a high school diploma, by age and province or territory, 2006

| Province or territory | 18 years | | 19 years | | 20 years | | 25 years | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | Women | Men | Women | Men | Women | Men | Women | Men |
| | percentage | | | | | | | |
| **Canada** | **65.8** | **58.3** | **84.0** | **77.4** | **86.5** | **81.2** | **90.2** | **86.1** |
| Newfoundland and Labrador | 60.0 | 51.1 | 83.1 | 75.6 | 80.7 | 79.1 | 88.0 | 82.7 |
| Prince Edward Island | 70.2 | 52.3 | 87.5 | 80.8 | 89.6 | 78.2 | 92.4 | 83.2 |
| Nova Scotia | 54.8 | 44.4 | 84.6 | 76.8 | 88.6 | 81.4 | 90.4 | 85.1 |
| New Brunswick | 60.6 | 51.7 | 86.7 | 77.9 | 89.0 | 83.4 | 91.1 | 85.1 |
| Quebec | 79.0 | 68.0 | 83.6 | 75.0 | 86.4 | 77.8 | 90.1 | 84.6 |
| Ontario | 62.9 | 55.2 | 84.8 | 77.8 | 88.3 | 83.3 | 92.0 | 88.9 |
| Manitoba | 55.3 | 48.2 | 77.9 | 72.4 | 78.3 | 73.8 | 83.7 | 79.1 |
| Saskatchewan | 50.5 | 44.2 | 75.5 | 71.6 | 78.9 | 77.0 | 84.8 | 81.4 |
| Alberta | 61.8 | 59.0 | 82.1 | 77.5 | 81.8 | 79.1 | 86.2 | 82.9 |
| British Columbia | 68.1 | 64.1 | 88.6 | 84.4 | 90.6 | 86.8 | 92.5 | 88.6 |
| Yukon Territory | 63.1 | 48.2 | 74.4 | 76.3 | 91.8 | 83.1 | 79.2 | 87.0 |
| Northwest Territories | 41.3 | 28.3 | 61.8 | 53.8 | 60.5 | 55.2 | 73.2 | 75.8 |
| Nunavut | 14.6 | 13.6 | 22.7 | 21.7 | 27.4 | 21.3 | 52.0 | 47.0 |

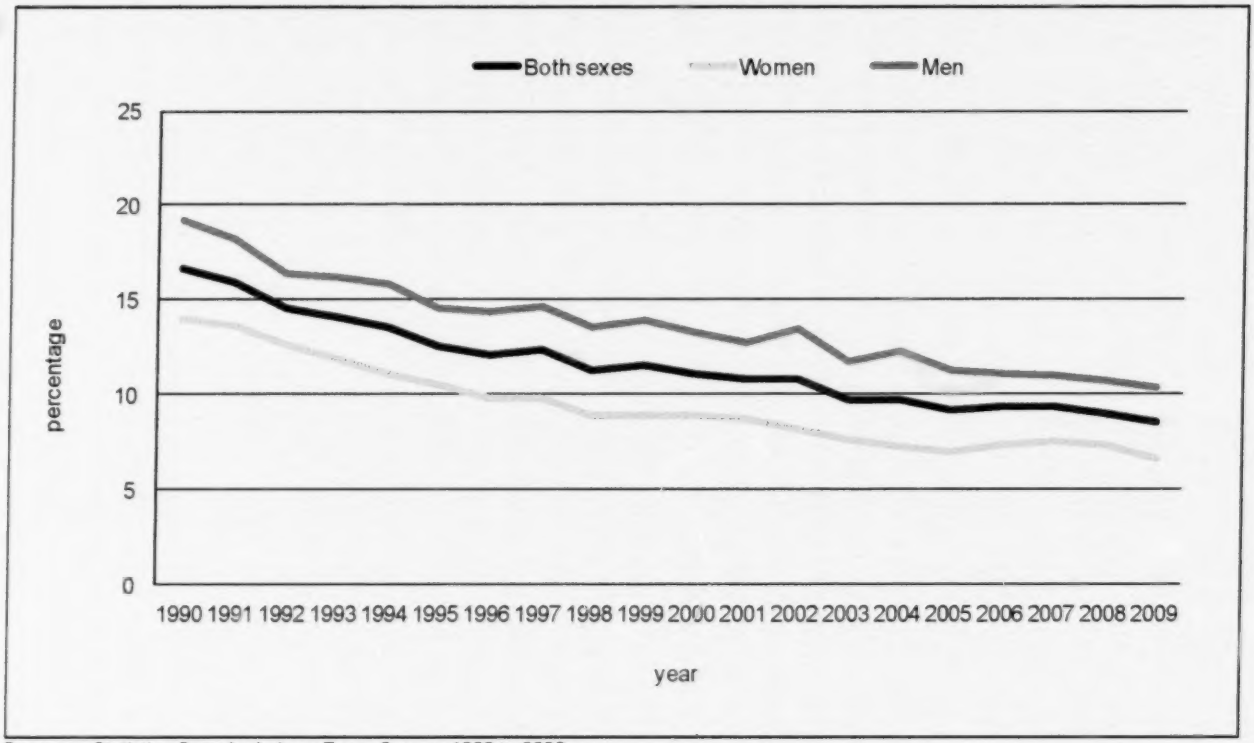
**Source:** Statistics Canada, Census of Population, 2006.

People who drop out of high school might try and earn their diploma later by returning to school as an adult. One way to measure the drop-out rate is to consider a dropout to be a 20- to 24-year-old who has not finished high school and is not currently going to school.[6]

In the last 20 years, dropout rates have been decreasing among women and men (Chart 3). In 1990, the dropout rate was 14% for women aged 20 to 24 and 19% for men of the same age group. In 2009, about 7% of women and 10% of men were dropouts, in other words, they were not attending school and did not have a high school diploma.

5. Even with provincial differences between school systems, a person who has not failed a year should have a high school diploma by age 19.
6. These rates are calculated by looking at school attendance during the months of the school year, namely September to April.

**Chart 3**
**Dropout rates of men and women aged 20 to 24, Canada, 1990 to 2009**




**Sources:** Statistics Canada, Labour Force Survey, 1990 to 2009.

According to a Statistics Canada study, the prevailing reasons for dropping out are school-related for both boys and girls.[7] However, other factors also played a considerable role and the study showed that reasons for dropping out vary by gender. Among certain young men, the desire to work was an important factor, whereas pregnancy and caring for children were reasons mentioned by a number of young women. In general, girls exhibit a higher level of commitment to school than boys (interest in learning, respect for rules and obligations), which helps explain why they are less likely to drop out than their male counterparts.[8]

At the provincial level, Newfoundland and Labrador and New Brunswick have shown the most progress (Table 6). In these two provinces, dropout rates for women in 1990 exceeded 15% and were among the highest in the country. In 2009, these rates were among the lowest (about 5% in both provinces).

7. Statistics Canada. 2002. *In and out of High School: First Results from the Second Cycle of the Youth in Transition Survey*, Culture, Tourism and the Centre for Education Statistics, Catalogue no. 81-595-MIE2004014, research paper.
8. Statistics Canada. 2002. *At a Crossroads: First Results for the 18 to 20-year-old Cohort of the Youth in Transition Survey*, Catalogue no. 81-591-XIE.

**Table 6**
**High school dropout rates, by province, 1990, 2000 and 2009**

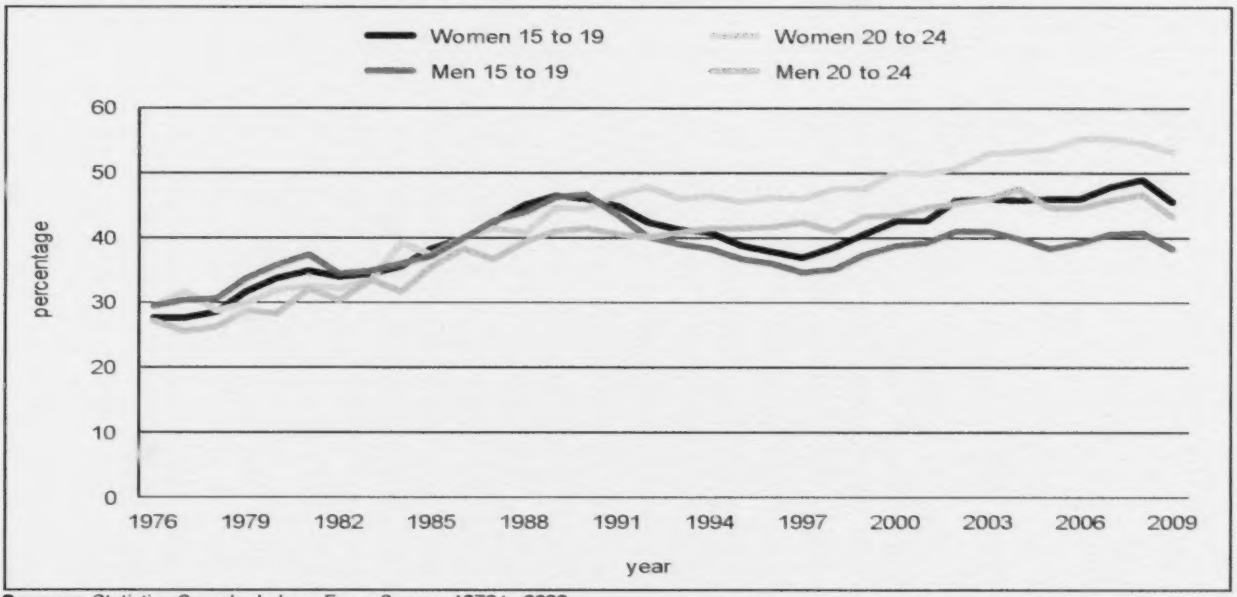
| Province | Women | | | Men | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | 1990 | 2000 | 2009 | 1990 | 2000 | 2009 |
| | percentage | | | | | |
| **Canada** | **14.0** | **8.9** | **6.6** | **19.2** | **13.2** | **10.3** |
| Newfoundland and Labrador | 15.9 | 6.1 | 5.1 | 26.3 | 11.6 | 7.5 |
| Prince Edward Island | 13.4 | 7.0 | 6.3 | 26.9 | 15.9 | 9.6 |
| Nova Scotia | 15.1 | 8.3 | 9.4 | 23.1 | 13.2 | 10.0 |
| New Brunswick | 15.2 | 8.7 | 5.0 | 19.3 | 14.5 | 11.3 |
| Quebec | 14.4 | 10.1 | 8.3 | 21.1 | 17.2 | 13.9 |
| Ontario | 13.4 | 8.1 | 5.1 | 18.1 | 10.6 | 9.3 |
| Manitoba | 13.7 | 12.4 | 9.3 | 20.8 | 16.5 | 12.4 |
| Saskatchewan | 17.0 | 9.7 | 8.3 | 19.3 | 12.7 | 11.4 |
| Alberta | 15.1 | 9.0 | 8.6 | 19.1 | 14.9 | 10.4 |
| British Columbia | 12.6 | 8.2 | 5.6 | 15.7 | 10.5 | 7.0 |

**Sources:** Statistics Canada, Labour Force Survey, 1990, 2000 and 2009.

## Paid work during high school

If we look at the change in labour market participation over a long period (namely holding a job or looking for one), we see an almost steady rise in the participation rate of full-time students aged 20 to 24 (29% in 1976, versus 53% in 2009) (Chart 4). Among those aged 15 to 19, the trend was somewhat different, as the participation rate dropped during the 1990s and then increased.

**Chart 4**
**Participation rates of full-time students, by age group, Canada, 1976 to 2009**




**Sources:** Statistics Canada, Labour Force Survey, 1976 to 2009.

Students who work a few hours per week while going to school are not necessarily exposed to greater risks of failing. Although working full time can be more problematic, this reality affects only a minority of students. In 2009, 1% of full-time students aged 15 to 19 were working full time, a percentage that does not vary by gender (Table 7).

**Table 7**
**Full-time students holding a full- or part-time job, by age group, Canada, 2009**

| Job | 15 to 19 | | | 20 to 24 | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | Both sexes | Women | Men | Both sexes | Women | Men |
| | percentage | | | | | |
| **Total — Employment Rate** | **34.1** | **38.5** | **29.6** | **44.6** | **49.4** | **38.9** |
| Working full-time | 1.0 | 0.9 | 1.2 | 5.7 | 5.1 | 6.4 |
| Working part-time | 33.1 | 37.7 | 28.5 | 38.9 | 44.4 | 32.5 |
| | thousands | | | | | |
| Population | 1733.2 | 872.9 | 860.3 | 783.3 | 421.9 | 361.4 |
| Employment[1] | 591.2 | 336.3 | 255.0 | 349.1 | 208.6 | 140.5 |

1. Full-time and part-time.
**Source:** Statistics Canada, Labour Force Survey, 2009.

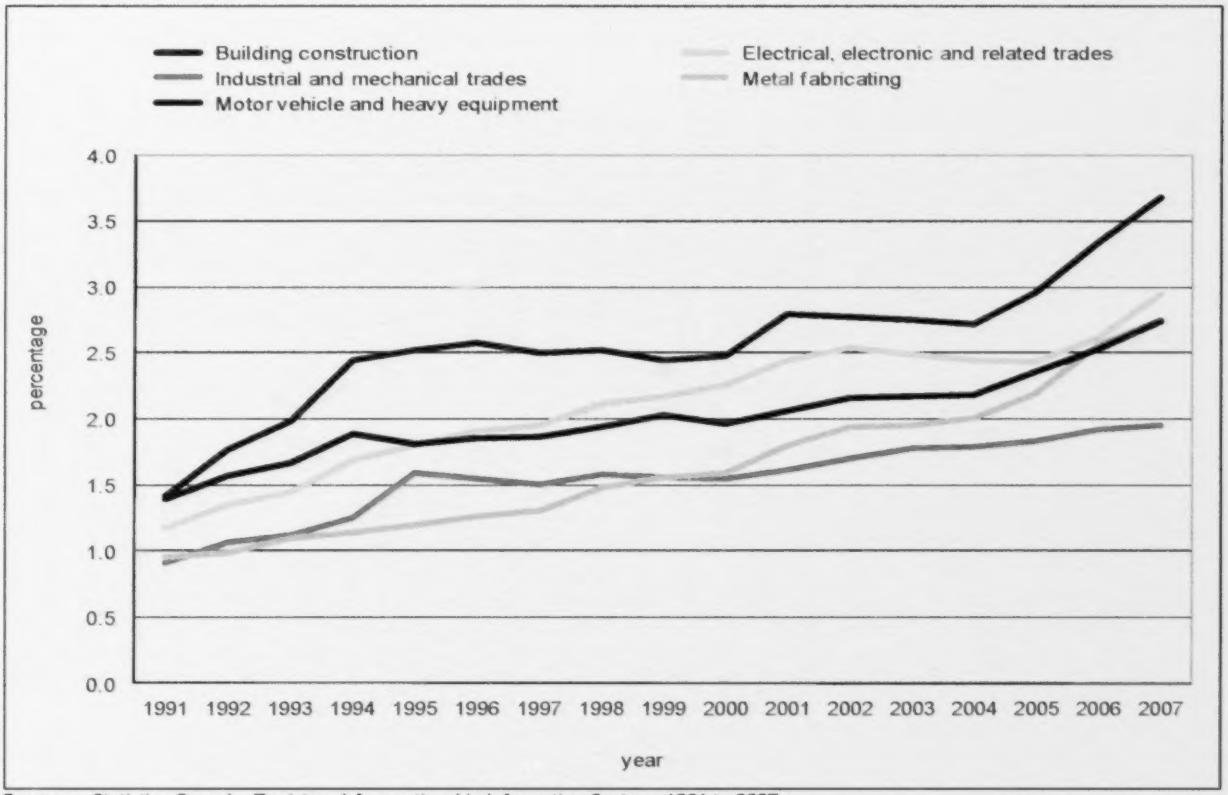
Even so, female students were more likely than their male counterparts to work part time. For example, 38% of full-time female students aged 15 to 19 were working part time, compared to 28% of men in the same age group. A similar difference was seen among those aged 20 to 24.

## Trade schools and registered apprenticeship training programs

Registered apprenticeship training programs include six major trade groups: building construction, electrical, electronic and related trades, food and services, industrial and related mechanical trades, metal fabricating, and motor vehicle and heavy equipment. The only one of these trade groups in which women are a majority is food and service trades (with women accounting for 65% of enrolments in 2007, up from 50% in 1991).

However, women are definitely in the minority in all the other registered apprenticeship training programs like building construction or electrical and electronic trades. For example, the percentage of women enrolled in building construction programs was 3.7% in 2007, a slight increase over the 1.4% in 1991 (Chart 5). A similar increase in female enrolments is common to most of the other non-traditional programs.

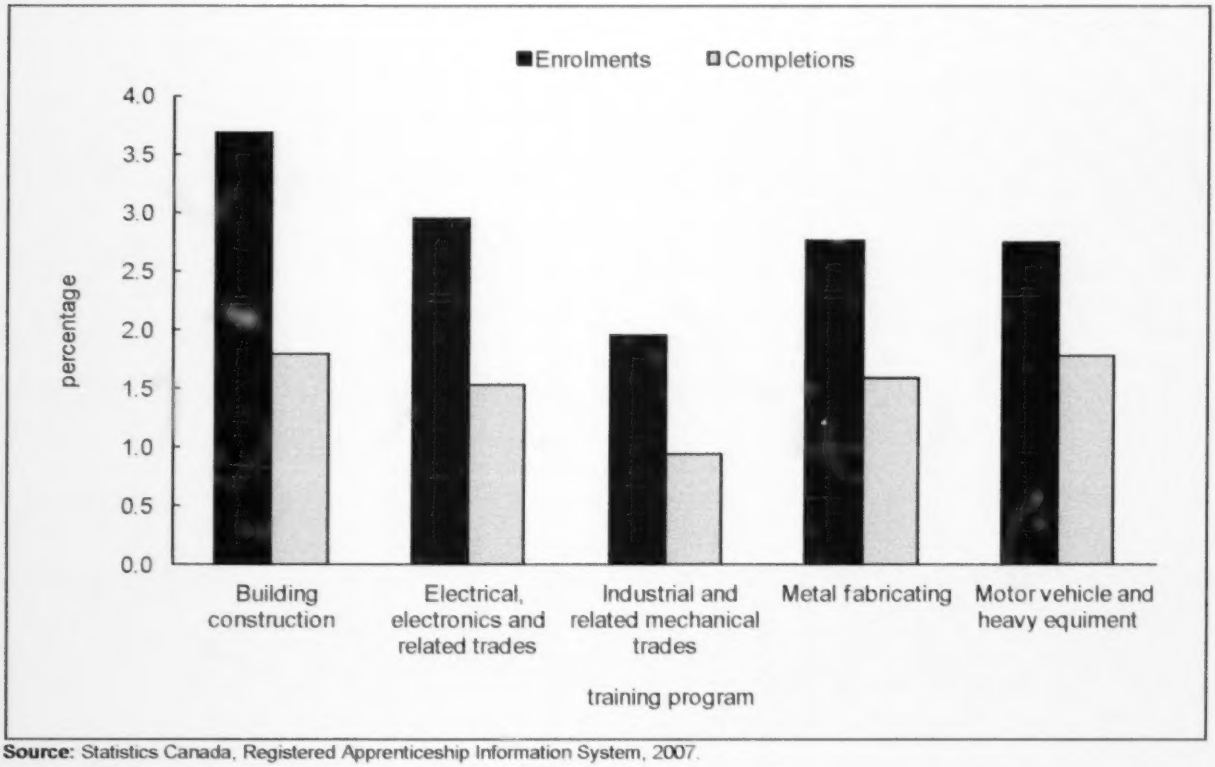
**Chart 5**
**Women in registered apprenticeship training programs, by non-traditional trade group, Canada, 1991 to 2007**




**Sources:** Statistics Canada, Registered Apprenticeship Information System, 1991 to 2007.

Despite the increased number of women in registered apprenticeship training programs, many of them drop out and do not earn their certificate. In 2007, although women accounted for 3.0% of enrolments in training programs for electrical, electronic and related trades, they accounted for only 1.5% of all completions in these fields of study (Chart 6).

**Chart 6**
***Women among enrolments* and completions in registered apprenticeship training programs, by non-traditional trade group, Canada, 2007**




**Source:** Statistics Canada, Registered Apprenticeship Information System, 2007.

## College studies

Since women are more likely than men to earn a high school diploma, it is not surprising to find that they also account for the majority of enrolments in college programs (Table 8). The proportion of women is even greater among graduates. In 2006/2007, women accounted for 56% of college enrolments and 59% of graduates. In the most popular college program, namely humanities, the difference between enrolments and graduates was even more pronounced: women accounted for 57% of enrolments, but 62% of graduates.

## Table 8
## Women among enrolments and graduates of the various college programs, Canada, 2000 to 2007

| College program | Enrolments | | | Graduates | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | 2000/2001 | 2003/2004 | 2006/2007 | 2000/2001 | 2003/2004 | 2006/2007 |
| | percentage | | | | | |
| **Total — College programs** | **55.7** | **55.7** | **55.5** | **59.3** | **60.0** | **59.2** |
| Personal improvement and leisure | 54.0 | 63.1 | 68.1 | 70.0 | 84.8 | 88.7 |
| Education | 88.3 | 84.8 | 84.3 | 91.8 | 88.8 | 86.5 |
| Visual and Performing Arts and Communication Technology | 61.3 | 61.6 | 62.1 | 62.0 | 61.1 | 64.0 |
| Humanities | 58.3 | 58.0 | 57.2 | 62.4 | 62.7 | 62.2 |
| Social and Behavioural Sciences, Law | 78.6 | 78.1 | 80.1 | 79.3 | 80.5 | 82.1 |
| Business, Management and Public Administration | 64.3 | 61.5 | 60.6 | 71.6 | 69.0 | 66.1 |
| Physical and Life Sciences, and Technologies | 53.1 | 49.8 | 53.1 | 59.2 | 52.3 | 54.3 |
| Mathematics, Computer and Information Sciences | 27.6 | 22.3 | 23.6 | 33.2 | 26.2 | 23.4 |
| Architecture, Engineering and Related Services | 14.6 | 13.2 | 13.4 | 16.5 | 15.2 | 14.0 |
| Agriculture, Natural Resources and Conservation | 38.8 | 38.9 | 39.5 | 40.2 | 44.1 | 41.4 |
| Health, Parks, Recreation and Fitness | 82.9 | 82.7 | 81.5 | 84.3 | 84.6 | 83.7 |
| Personal, Protective and Transportation Services | 41.1 | 39.2 | 39.2 | 41.2 | 42.1 | 40.0 |
| Other instructional programs | 57.5 | 55.4 | 48.7 | 50.0 | 52.7 | 56.9 |

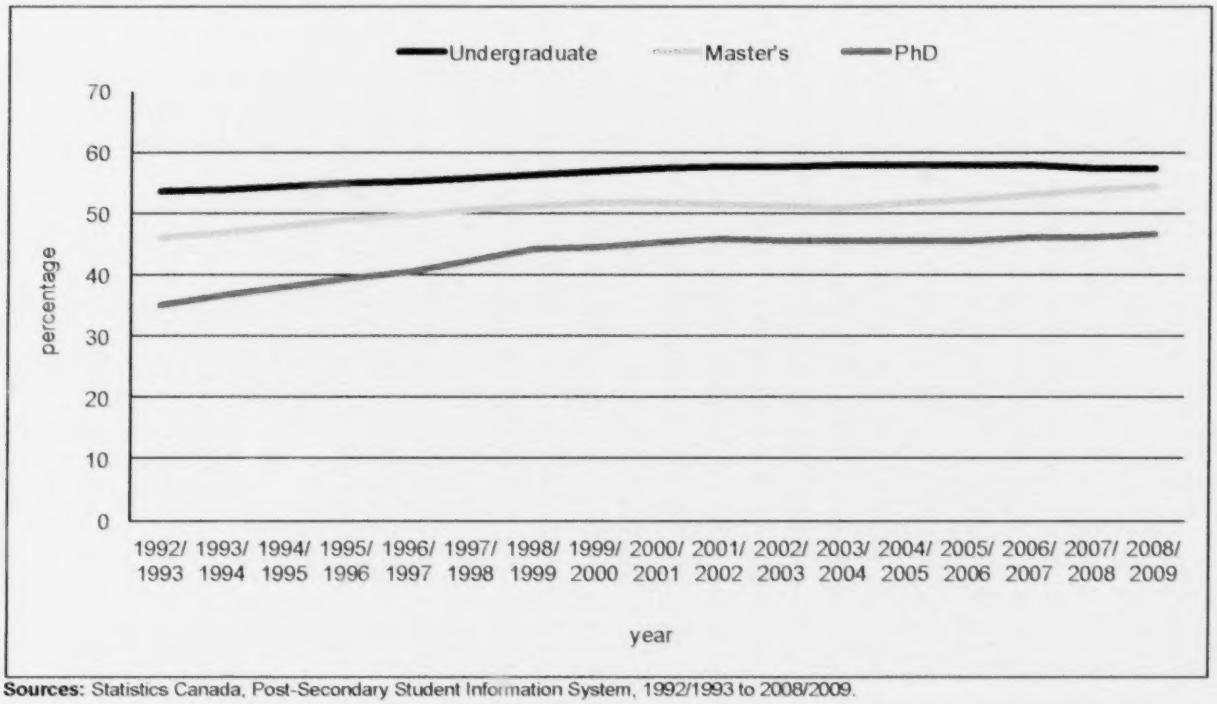
**Sources:** Statistics Canada, Postsecondary Student Information System, 2000/2001 to 2006/2007.

The proportion of women among both enrolments and completions varied greatly from one college program to another. For example, women made up 87% of graduates in education programs and accounted for 84% of those in the field of health, parks, recreation and fitness. The two fields in which the smallest proportion of women were recorded were mathematics, computer and information sciences (23% of graduates), and architecture, engineering and related services (14% of graduates). In these two fields, the share of women graduates was lower in 2006/2007 than it had been in the early 2000s.

## University studies

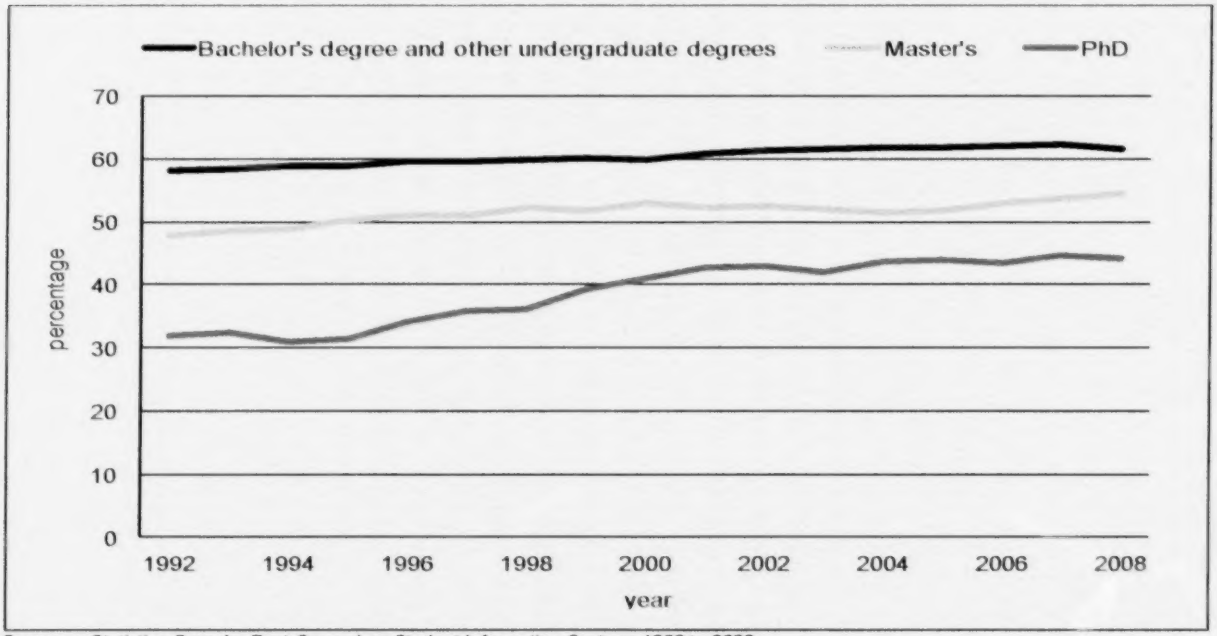
Since the early 1990s, women have made up the majority of full-time students enrolled in undergraduate university programs (Chart 7). The proportion of women among students enrolled in undergraduate programs has never reached or exceeded 60%. However, their percentage among graduates has risen above this threshold since 2001. In 2008 for example, 62% of all university undergraduates were women (Chart 8).

### Chart 7
### Percentage of women among full-time university enrolments, by program level, Canada, 1992/1993 to 2008/2009




**Sources:** Statistics Canada, Post-Secondary Student Information System, 1992/1993 to 2008/2009.

**Chart 8**
**Percentage of women among university graduates, by program level, Canada, 1992 to 2008**




**Sources:** Statistics Canada, Post-Secondary Student Information System, 1992 to 2008.

The proportion of female Master's graduates is also increasing: in 1997, it passed the 50% mark and in 2008, reached 54%. At the PhD level, although female students remain in the minority, their proportion has increased even more than in the other two postsecondary levels. In 1992, 32% of all graduates with a PhD were women, a proportion that climbed to 44% in 2008 (Chart 8).

## Women and university programs

Like at the college level, women and men tend to choose different university programs (Table 9). In 2008, women accounted for over three out of four graduates in education and in health sciences programs. In humanities, in visual and performing arts and communications technologies, as well as in social and behavioural sciences and law, roughly two out of three graduates were women.

**Table 9**
**Percentage of women among university graduates, by field of study, Canada, 1992 and 2008**

| Field of study | 1992 | 2008 |
|---|---|---|
| | percentage | |
| **Total — Instructional programs** | **56.4** | **60.0** |
| Architecture, engineering and related services | 17.5 | 22.2 |
| Mathematics, computer and information sciences | 35.2 | 30.4 |
| Personal, protective and transportation services | 18.2 | 44.9 |
| Business, management and public administration | 51.4 | 53.0 |
| Agriculture, natural resources and conservation | 36.7 | 55.9 |
| Physical and life sciences, and technologies | 45.6 | 57.3 |
| Humanities | 63.7 | 64.3 |
| Visual and performing arts and communication technology | 65.9 | 66.5 |
| Social and behavioural sciences, law | 59.3 | 67.0 |
| Other instructional programs | 73.6 | 69.4 |
| Education | 72.6 | 76.1 |
| Health, parks, recreation and fitness | 68.0 | 77.0 |

**Sources:** Statistics Canada, Postsecondary Student Information System, 1992 and 2008.

The scenario was completely different for the architecture, engineering and related services program, where only 22% of graduates were women in 2008 (up from 18% in 1990). In the mathematics, computer and information sciences programs, 30% of graduates were women, down from 35% in 1990. The proportion of women graduates increased in all the other university programs, except the residual category "Other instructional programs".

## Studying part time at university

In the early 1990s, women were more likely than men to study part time at university. In 1992/1993, 33% of women undergraduates were studying part time, compared with only 24% of men (Table 10). In 2008/2009, this difference had nearly disappeared at the undergraduate level, with 20% of the women studying part time compared with 18% of the men.

**Table 10**
**Percentage of university students enrolled part-time, by level of program, Canada, 1992/1993 and 2008/2009**

| Sex | Undergraduate | | Master's | | PhD | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | 1992/1993 | 2008/2009 | 1992/1993 | 2008/2009 | 1992/1993 | 2008/2009 |
| | percentage | | | | | |
| Women | 32.7 | 20.3 | 44.0 | 30.3 | 19.7 | 6.2 |
| Men | 24.4 | 18.3 | 37.1 | 26.7 | 15.1 | 5.8 |

**Sources:** Statistics Canada, Postsecondary Student Information System, 1992/1993 and 2008/2009.

## Employment earnings of women and men by level of schooling

Even though women are more likely than men to go to college or university, they do not necessarily end up with higher employment earnings than men when they enter the job market.[9] In 2005, young women aged 25 to 29 with full-year, full-time work were earning 85 cents for each dollar earned by their male counterparts (Table 11).

### Table 11
### Employment income in 2005, by age group and educational attainment, Canada

| Educational attainment | 25 to 29 | | | 30 to 34 | | | 35 to 39 | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | Women | Men | | Women | Men | | Women | Men | |
| | dollars | | ratio | dollars | | ratio | dollars | | ratio |
| Total | 32,084 | 37,684 | 0.85 | 36,891 | 46,709 | 0.79 | 38,799 | 51,579 | 0.75 |
| No certificate, diploma or degree | 20,574 | 30,610 | 0.67 | 22,639 | 35,159 | 0.64 | 24,391 | 38,457 | 0.63 |
| High school diploma or equivalent | 26,000 | 33,567 | 0.77 | 29,768 | 40,245 | 0.74 | 32,000 | 44,668 | 0.72 |
| Registered apprenticeship or other trades certificate or diploma | 24,741 | 37,788 | 0.65 | 27,152 | 43,487 | 0.62 | 29,642 | 47,680 | 0.62 |
| College, CEGEP or other non-university certificate or diploma or university certificate or diploma below bachelor level | 31,251 | 39,199 | 0.80 | 34,957 | 48,000 | 0.73 | 38,121 | 52,936 | 0.72 |
| University certificate or diploma above bachelor level | 40,441 | 45,291 | 0.89 | 47,573 | 58,140 | 0.82 | 52,941 | 65,166 | 0.81 |
| Degree in medicine, dentistry, veterinary medecine or optometry | 47,464 | 47,000 | 1.01 | 54,467 | 58,362 | 0.93 | 62,317 | 70,000 | 0.89 |
| Masters/doctorate | 43,086 | 44,850 | 0.96 | 53,064 | 61,816 | 0.86 | 60,342 | 72,201 | 0.84 |

**Source:** Statistics Canada, Census of Population, 2006.

Employment earnings differed between women and men according to their level of schooling. For example, women aged 25 to 29 with a graduate or professional degree (Master's or PhD) and with full-year full-time work were earning 96 cents for each dollar earned by their male counterparts in 2005. Among those women with a bachelor's degree, this ratio was 89 cents. However, young women with a registered apprenticeship certificate or a trade school certificate were earning only 65 cents for each dollar earned by their male counterparts (Table 11). The trade programs most often chosen by women, such as hair-dressing, lead to lower-paying jobs than the ones favoured by men, such as building construction or electrical, electronics and related trades.

Among women aged 25 to 29 who graduated from university, employment earnings were generally to men's advantage (Table 12). For example, among graduates in business, management and public administration, the median earnings of men with full-year full-time work was $46,500, compared to $41,700 for women (a ratio of 0.90). The fields of "Physical and life sciences, and technologies" and "Health, parks, recreation and fitness" were the two exceptions to this wage premium for men. In the latter case, women aged 25 to 29 were earning $1.07 for each dollar earned by men in the same age group who had studied in the same field.

9. See also the chapter on economic well-being, particularly the text box on differences in wage gains between women and men.

## Table 12
## Median earnings of full-time, full-year employees, university graduates, by field of study and age group, Canada, 2006

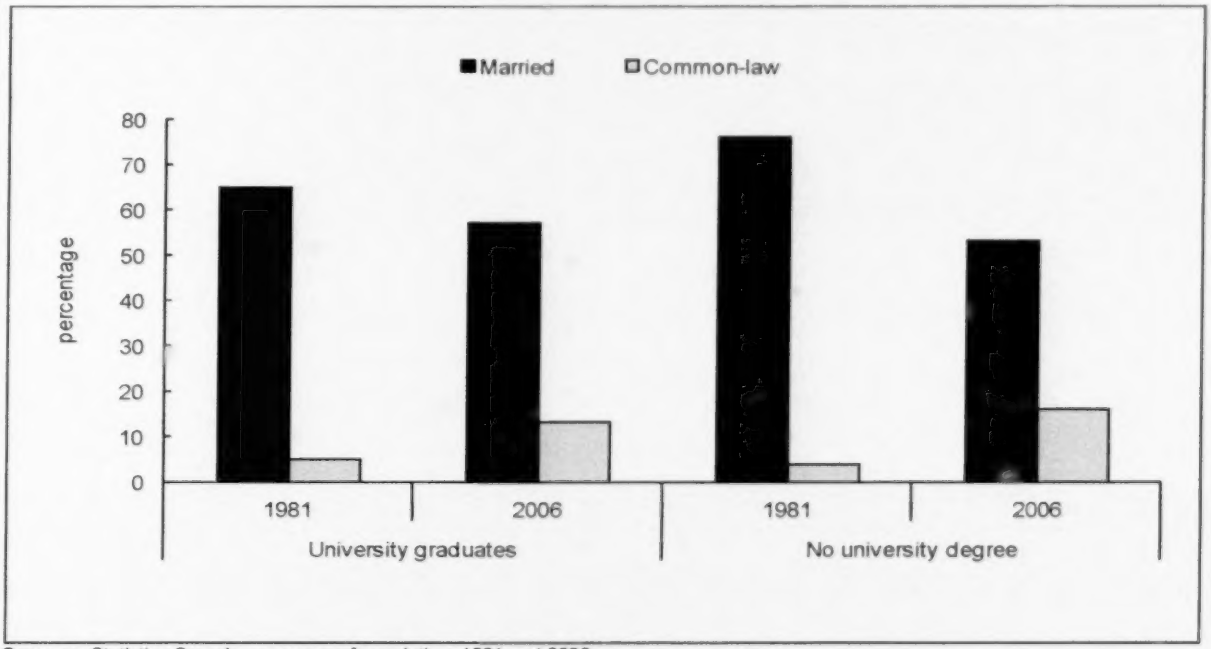
| Field of study | 25 to 29 | | | | | 30 to 34 | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | Distribution | | Median income | | | Distribution | | Median income | | |
| | Women | Men | Women | Men | | Women | Men | Women | Men | |
| | percentage | | dollars | | ratio | percentage | | dollars | | ratio |
| Education | 9.5 | 2.3 | 41,154 | 43,174 | 0.95 | 10.7 | 3.4 | 47,561 | 52,916 | 0.90 |
| Visual and performing arts, and communications technologies | 4.6 | 4.1 | 30,530 | 33,496 | 0.91 | 3.6 | 3.7 | 39,041 | 40,482 | 0.96 |
| Humanities | 5.4 | 3.3 | 34,407 | 36,304 | 0.95 | 5.7 | 3.8 | 41,392 | 47,200 | 0.88 |
| Social and behavioural sciences and law | 15.9 | 6.9 | 38,402 | 41,448 | 0.93 | 16.8 | 8.3 | 47,303 | 56,000 | 0.84 |
| Business, management and public administration | 27.9 | 17.2 | 41,728 | 46,539 | 0.90 | 27.9 | 17.3 | 50,250 | 64,833 | 0.78 |
| Physical and life sciences and technologies | 4.2 | 3.5 | 37,677 | 36,827 | 1.02 | 4.0 | 3.8 | 46,647 | 55,182 | 0.85 |
| Mathematics, computer and information sciences | 3.7 | 11.0 | 44,745 | 47,987 | 0.93 | 4.1 | 8.9 | 53,090 | 62,227 | 0.85 |
| Architecture, engineering and related services | 4.3 | 37.0 | 47,977 | 52,175 | 0.92 | 4.3 | 36.1 | 55,027 | 65,281 | 0.84 |
| Agriculture, natural resources and conservation | 1.9 | 3.3 | 41,162 | 45,355 | 0.91 | 1.7 | 3.3 | 47,506 | 56,278 | 0.84 |
| Health, parks, recreation and fitness | 16.9 | 4.4 | 49,969 | 46,872 | 1.07 | 16.6 | 5.2 | 55,650 | 58,666 | 0.95 |
| Personal, protective and transportation services | 5.8 | 7.0 | 38,200 | 45,135 | 0.85 | 4.8 | 6.4 | 55,000 | 66,612 | 0.83 |

**Note:** Full-year employees: self-employed workers are excluded from this table. University graduates include persons with a Bachelor's degree or higher.
**Source:** Statistics Canada, Census of Population, 2006.

## Female university graduates and marriage[10]

In 1981, women aged 25 to 49 who were university graduates were less likely to get married than those who were less educated. This is no longer the case today. Since 2001, there has even been a positive relationship between having a university education and the likelihood of being married. As a result of a significant decrease in the number of married women among less-educated women, women aged 25 to 49 with a university degree were more likely to be married in 2006 than those who were less educated (57% and 53%, respectively) (see the chart below). Although women with a university degree were somewhat less likely to live common-law, they were still more likely to live as part of a couple than those who were not graduates.

### Percentage of women who are married or in a common-law union aged 25 to 49, by graduation from university, Canada, 1981 and 2006




**Sources:** Statistics Canada, censuses of population, 1981 and 2006.

When both spouses have the same education level, for example a university degree, this is called educational homogamy. Due to the rapid growth in the proportion of female university graduates, men with a university degree had more opportunities of finding a spouse with a degree in 2006 than in 1981. Thus in 2006, among married men with a university degree, 67% of them had a spouse with the same level of education as they had, whereas that proportion was only 38% in 1981.

For their part, married women with a university degree aged 25 to 49 had continued their high tendency towards educational homogamy. In 2006, the educational homogamy rate of women with a university degree was 64%, compared to 67% 25 years before.

10. Martin, Laetitia and Feng Hou. 2010. "Sharing their lives: women, marital trends and education", *Canadian Social Trends*, no. 90 (winter), Statistics Canada Catalogue no. 11-008-X.

## Women in the field of education

Women increasingly make up the majority of workers in education-related occupations. Therefore, young people are much more likely to have female teachers and professors throughout their academic career. The proportion of women is especially high at the elementary and preschool levels, where they make up 84% of the teaching staff (slightly up from 81% in 1996) (Table 13). In 1996, among secondary school teachers, there was near parity in terms of the representation of women and men. This is decreasingly the case because, in 2006, 57% of secondary school teachers were women.

### Table 13
### Women in teaching-related professions, Canada, 1996 and 2006

| Profession | 2006 | | | 1996 | 2006 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | Total | Women | Men | Women | |
| | number | | | percentage | |
| **Total — All teachers** | **667,990** | **435,820** | **232,170** | **61.8** | **65.2** |
| Professors and teaching assistants at the university and postsecondary level | 125,410 | 57,680 | 67,725 | 39.3 | 46.0 |
| University professors | 56,895 | 22,150 | 34,750 | 33.8 | 38.9 |
| Teaching and research assistants at the postsecondary level | 68,515 | 35,535 | 32,975 | 48.6 | 51.9 |
| Teachers at the college level and in vocational schools | 103,200 | 54,755 | 48,445 | 51.6 | 53.1 |
| Teachers at the college level and other upgrading program instructors | 103,200 | 54,755 | 48,445 | 51.6 | 53.1 |
| Teachers at the secondary, primary and preschool levels and guidance counsellors | 439,375 | 323,380 | 115,995 | 68.7 | 73.6 |
| Teachers at the secondary level | 161,095 | 92,295 | 68,805 | 50.6 | 57.3 |
| Teachers at the primary and preschool levels | 261,675 | 218,740 | 42,935 | 81.2 | 83.6 |
| Guidance counsellors and educational counsellors | 16,605 | 12,350 | 4,255 | 64.4 | 74.4 |

**Source:** Statistics Canada, Census of Population, 2006.

While women are also the majority among high school and college teachers, the situation is completely different at the university level. In 2006, the proportion of female university professors reached 39%, compared to 34% 10 years earlier (Table 13).

## Participation in job-related studies or training programs

It is increasingly common for employees to be asked to upgrade their occupational knowledge and skills by taking job-related training. In 2008, 36% of people aged 25 to 64 had participated in job-related studies or training, an increase from 30% in 2002. These proportions were about the same for both women and men.

There was a difference between women and men in terms of the support they received from employers. In 2008, 46% of female workers had received support from their employer while taking a training or education program, a proportion that reached 55% among men (Table 14).

### Table 14
### Participation in job-related studies or training programs, Canada, 2002 and 2008

| Participation | Both sexes | | Women | | Men | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | 2002 | 2008 | 2002 | 2008 | 2002 | 2008 |
| | percentage | | | | | |
| Proportion of Canadians aged 25 to 64 who took job-related studies or training | | | | | | |
| Total — Studies or training | 30.1 | 36.0 | 30.2 | 35.9 | 29.9 | 36.2 |
| Studies | 8.2 | 8.1 | 8.9 | 8.7 | 7.6 | 7.6 |
| Training | 24.6 | 30.6 | 24.5 | 30.1 | 24.7 | 31.2 |
| Proportion of persons who received support from an employer from among working Canadians aged 25 to 64 who took a formal education program[1] | 52.0 | 49.9 | 48.0 | 46.0 | 56.5 | 54.6 |

1. In 2002, represents activities undertaken from January to December 2002. In 2008, represents activities undertaken from July 2007 to June 2008.

**Sources:** Statistics Canada, 2003 Adult Education and Training Survey; and 2008 Access and Support to Education and Training Survey.